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August 2018 “DO YOU TRUST GOD?”

Greetings in the Name of Jesus!

Have you ever trusted someone, only to be let down? I’m talking about trusting a person you thought would never lie to you or fail to come through when they have given you their word. Did you end up questioning their reliability? Let me take this a step further: have you ever felt as though God has let you down?

There is so much about God that we, as Christians, simply do not comprehend. Two of the greatest verses in the Bible seem to exemplify this predicament;

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began (Titus 1:2)

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Hebrews 6:18)

God is incapable of lying because He is absolute holiness, purity, and righteousness. There is nothing in Him that can produce a lie. He is the very epitome of truth and nothing deceptive or misleading can come from Him. Simply put, there is no root of duplicity anywhere in His character or being.

This can be an extremely difficult concept to grasp. One reason we struggle with this is because we have the capacity to lie. Sadly, many have lived up to this capacity and lived very deceitful lives.

It is true that once we are born again our old sin nature is removed and, in its place, we are given the very life and nature of God. It is also true that once we have received His nature, we have the ability to live a holy life and not lie. But no matter how much of God’s life we walk in, we will never become deity. We have His life and nature but not His deity.

If we were to summarize our present existence as a Christian it would be this: we have a born-again spirit which has the life and nature of God; we have a mind, the thought process of our soul, that needs to be renewed to the word of God instead of the ways of the world; and we have a flesh body that will someday be glorified for all eternity. While existing in this state, we will always have the potential to lie.

Accepting the truth that God cannot lie is a step of faith because we don’t know what it is like to be incapable of telling a lie. Personally, I believe this is why it appears to be so difficult for many Believers to live by faith. You see, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). But if we have doubts about God’s reliability, then we may not accept His Word as being the final authority on a matter.

This brings up a very unique question: Why would any Christian doubt God's honesty? I am convinced that few Christians consciously doubt God. However, we have no concept of what it is like to be deity and exist as absolute perfection. Then, because we have been lied to so many times in our lives, maybe even by fellow Christians and even ministers, it's almost as though we tend to view what God has said as being on the same level as what people say. Essentially, we lean toward doubting much of what we hear regardless of the source. It's like having an, *"I'll believe it when I see it,"* mentality. This creates a genuine problem for the Believer. If we have any doubt about the integrity or accuracy of God's Word, then we will have great difficulty seeing His promises manifest in our lives.

I mentioned how I am convinced that few Christians consciously doubt God. In fact, I believe that if you ask any one who is born again, they will tell you that they believe every word in the Bible is true. But there is another thing I've become convinced of: the way we live is a reflection of what we believe. No doubt you've heard the term, "actions speak louder than words," and nowhere is this truer than in the lives of Christians. We say we believe the Bible, yet if that is so, then what the Bible says will show up in us. I'll give you a very simple example.

I was contacted one time by a man who had been preaching for many years. Some very discouraging events had taken place in his life over a period of several months and he had become somewhat despondent. One of the questions he asked me was, *"Is there really a Heaven and a Hell?"* Quite frankly, I was somewhat stunned by what he asked because the reality of Heaven and Hell is fundamental to Christian teaching. But I want to point out what may not be so obvious in his question.

The concept of a real Heaven and a real Hell are clearly portrayed in scripture. But by asking me such a question, this minister was actually saying, *"I am willing to accept your word over that of God."* In other words, he had come to question God's truthfulness, what He has said in scripture, and was willing to consider my words as being more reliable than God's!

I realize that you may have no doubt about the existence of Heaven and Hell. On the other hand, do you have doubt about anything else God has said? Are there any passages of scripture that you do not believe? Upon hearing such a question, I firmly trust that most Christians would respond by saying something like, *"No, Brother Martin, there is nothing about God's Word that I don't believe!"* Well, let's take a look at some verses to find out how much we really believe God.

Earlier in this letter I referred to Romans 10:17, *"So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* Thus, according to scripture, faith does *not* come by sickness, tragedy, financial hardship, accidents, or disaster; it only comes by hearing God's Word. Do you believe this? Every Christian I know says they believe it, but I have observed that some of them live a life that demonstrates otherwise. I'll explain.

I have encountered numerous Christians who spend more time reading books by other Christians, pastors, evangelists, and teachers than they do reading God's word. They'll read books about how to be a good parent, how to be a good husband or wife, how to be a good pastor, how to prosper, how to grow spiritually, how to live by faith, and so on. Then they try to pattern their lives after what they have read in those books. Yet the Bible says we are to live by faith, and that faith only comes by hearing God's Word. If more time is spent reading what people have said

about the Bible than reading the Bible itself, then we are esteeming man's words to be of more benefit than God's.

Please don't misunderstand; I am not saying that reading books is wrong. But if we are to live by faith, and faith only comes by hearing God's word, then how is it possible to have a faith-life if we are not getting into the Word? Remember, God is the One who said that faith comes by hearing His Word. So, do we *really* believe Him?

Let's look at some other verses;

***He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.
(Psalm 107:20)***

***But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:
the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
(Isaiah 53:5)***

***That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,
Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. (Matthew 8:17)***

***Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead
to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.
(1 Peter 2:24)***

Do you believe these verses or not? Do you believe that Jesus paid the price for the healing of any and all sickness and disease? Do you believe that with or without medical help, you can have a manifestation of healing in your body simply because God said so in His Word? Many people would refer to all of this as "divine healing".

What amazes me is how so many Christians will choose to believe the first part of 1 Peter 2:24 about Jesus bearing our sins but refute the latter part about our healing! How on earth can we justify such "selective belief"? If I may be so bold, it's as if those Believers are saying, "Yes, God, I believe you when you tell me in your Word that Jesus bare my sins in His own body. But quite frankly, you are lying when it comes to that healing stuff."

I realize that nobody would actually say it that way, but isn't that the message we're sending if we refute divine healing? Please remember that it is impossible for God to lie. Since in His Word He has definitively proclaimed the truth of divine healing, then whose words do we consider more powerful than God's to disprove Him? Incredibly, that is exactly what people are doing when they accept what is said in books or sermons that is in opposition to divine healing.

Along with the example of healing, consider the following verses:

***For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto
God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh
mysteries. (1 Corinthians 14:2)***

***He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that
prophesieth edifieth the church. (1 Corinthians 14:4)***

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. (1 Corinthians 14:14)

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 1:20)

God is telling us in His word that if we speak, or pray, in tongues, the following is happening:

- 1) We are spiritually communicating directly with God.
- 2) We are speaking mysteries (simply put, praying about things we don't understand).
- 3) We are edifying ourselves spiritually.
- 4) Our spirit is praying.
- 5) We are being built up on our most holy faith.

Since God is not a man that He should lie (Numbers 23:19), this means that the more we pray in tongues, the more we will get the results listed above. Conversely, we can say that if we do not pray in tongues, we will not get the results listed above. Again, please keep firmly planted in your mind that these are things God has said, not the traditions of a particular church or denomination.

On the other hand, if we remain focused on the books and sermons of men, we may come to believe such things as "tongues have passed away" or that a person cannot pray in tongues any time he wants. But I want to point you back to the words of our God who is totally incapable of lying. Scripture reveals that tongues were not given to pass away and that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit *can* pray in tongues any time desired. Knowing this, why in the world would a Christian choose to believe otherwise?

In the Bible we read:

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippian 4:19) Therefore, God will meet our need.

The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace. (Psalm 29:11) God has promised us peace; we have no excuse to worry.

⁵Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6) Do you need direction for your life? God has promised to give it.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5) No matter what happens, God has declared He will never turn His back on you.

There are so many other examples I could give that illustrate how much people are influenced by man's words more than they are God's. The point I'm trying to make in all of this is that whether we understand it or not, we must unconditionally come to the place of believing that God can never lie. Every promise He has made in His Word is true.

Living by faith can accurately be defined as “accepting that it is impossible for God to lie and acting in such a way that reflects such a belief.” You know, that almost sounds like something Jesus said,

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

As a Christian, you are the child of Someone who has never lied and never will. The Holy Spirit has been sent, in part, to guarantee that you have access to everything God has said is yours. Scripture, if you will, is the written form of His holy nature. Every word in the Bible is absolute truth, backed up by the perfection of His deity. Whatever He has said in His Word, you can accept as truth that will never die out or fail. When you choose to live according to what He has said, no matter how much it contradicts man’s “common sense”, you will see His promises come to pass in your life!

Your friend in Christ,

Jim

My sermon, “*How to Interpret Scripture*” is an excellent companion resource to this letter. You may order a copy on CD by using the form below.

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